

When Opportunity Knocks

Reaching Jehovah's Witnesses
with the Gospel

A Familiar Scene

“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

- 1 Peter 3:15 -

I. Introduction

A. Goals

- Informational: To understand who the Jehovah's Witnesses are and what they believe
- Apologetic: To demonstrate that their doctrine is unbiblical and mutually exclusive with Christianity
- Evangelistic: To equip you to adequately engage their arguments from Scripture and to faithfully evangelize them

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
 - But what about 2 John 10? → Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
 - “Hospitality for traveling teachers was common in the culture (cf. Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–12). The prohibition here is not to turn away the ignorant; it does not mean that believers may not invite unbelievers—even those who belong to a cult or false religion—into their midst. That would make giving the truth to them difficult, if not impossible. The point is that believers are not to welcome and provide care for traveling false teachers, who seek to stay in their homes, thereby giving the appearance of affirming what they teach and lending them credibility” (MacArthur, *1–3 John*, 236).

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture

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A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
 - 2 Corinthians 13:5; Acts 17:11
 - Even the Watchtower magazine “invites careful and critical examination of its contents in the light of the Scriptures” (*The Watchtower*, Aug 15, 1950: 263).

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
 - Ask: “Since God commands us to test all things by Scripture (2 Cor 13:5; Acts 17:11), and since *The Watchtower* magazine itself invites a critical examination of its contents in the light of Scripture—are you willing to examine the teachings of the Watchtower Society in the light of Scripture alone? If you find certain teachings of the Watchtower Society go against what Scripture says, what will you do?” (Rhodes, 40).

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
 - “When Jehovah’s Witnesses show up on the doorstep, the tendency of many Christians is to lambaste them about all the heresies in their belief system. ... It is better to focus on one or two issues during each meeting and deal with them thoroughly rather than to ‘get it all out on the table’ in a single setting” (Rhodes, 18).

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
 - “If you engage in thoughtful discussion of just one or two issues during your initial encounter—and you remain *kind and respectful* in the process—he or she will not only be impressed with your manner but will likely make another appointment to come back to discuss other issues. *This is what you want to happen!*” (Rhodes, 18).

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
- **Slow them down!**
 - “Instead of jumping around from verse to verse, let’s make sure that we thoroughly discuss each passage before we go on to the next one” (Rhodes, 18-19).

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
- Slow them down
- Ask leading questions
 - “When talking to a Jehovah’s Witness, you will not be able to force your opinion of what a verse means. But if you can help him to discover problems in Watchtower theology *for himself*, then you’ve really accomplished a good thing” (Rhodes, 19).

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
- Slow them down
- Ask leading questions
 - John 1:1 (NWT) – the Word was a god.
 - Isaiah 45:21 (NWT) – There is no other God but me;
A righteous God and a Savior, there is none besides me.

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
- Slow them down
- Ask leading questions
 - John 1:1 (NWT) – the Word was a god.
 - John 17:3 (NWT) – This means everlasting life, their coming to know you, the only true God.

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
- Slow them down
- Ask leading questions
 - John 1:1; Isaiah 45:21; John 17:3
 - Ask: “How Jesus can be a god if there is no true God but Jehovah?”

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
- Slow them down
- Ask leading questions
- **Undermine the authority of the Watchtower Society**
 - If you can lovingly demonstrate that the Watchtower Society has made false predictions and doctrinal contradictions, it calls into question their reliability and authority.

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- **Preach the Gospel!**

- “My wife and I have probably called on thousands of homes between the two of us. Not once did we encounter anyone who shared their...faith in Christ with us. ... Most people spoke to us in negative terms, telling us our beliefs were wrong but never bothering to tell us what was right. Nobody ever said anything about the love of Jesus Christ. No one ever tried to witness to us at the door.”

- Former JW Elder

I. Introduction

A. Goals

B. General Tips

- Preach the Gospel!
 - “No one ever tried to witness to us at the door.”
 - “After 35 years, what finally convinced you?”

I. Introduction

A. Goals

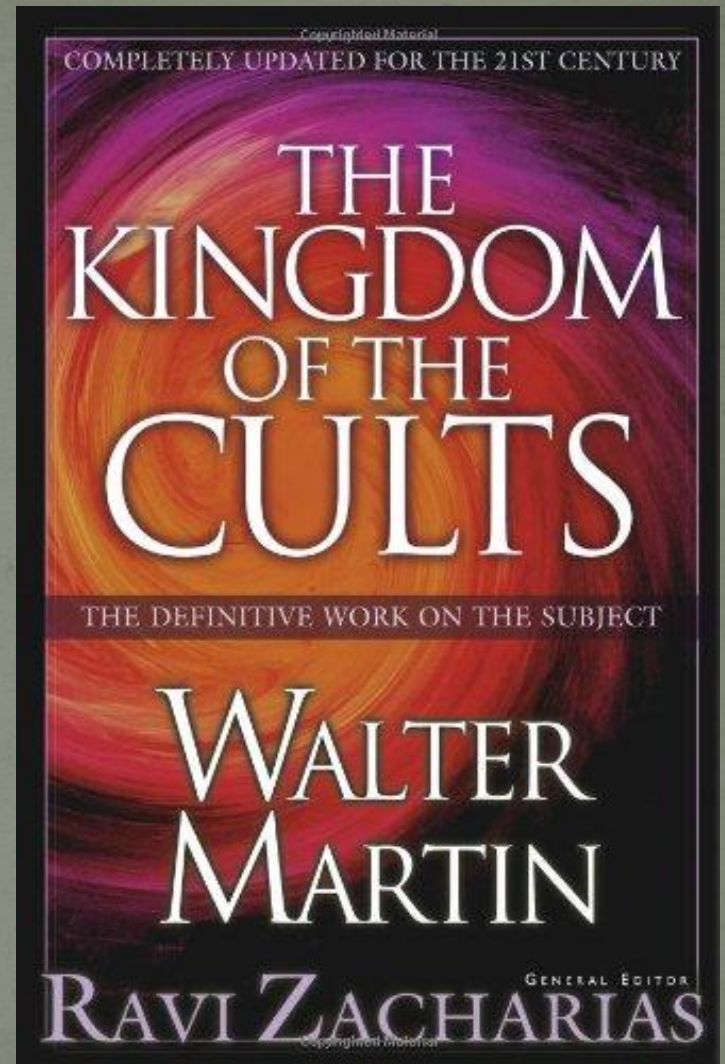
B. General Tips

- Be welcoming and respectful
- Encourage examination of beliefs in the light of Scripture
- One issue at a time
- Slow them down
- Ask leading questions
- Undermine the authority of the Watchtower Society
- Preach the Gospel
- **Pray!**

I. Introduction

- A. Goals
- B. General Tips
- C. Two Key Resources

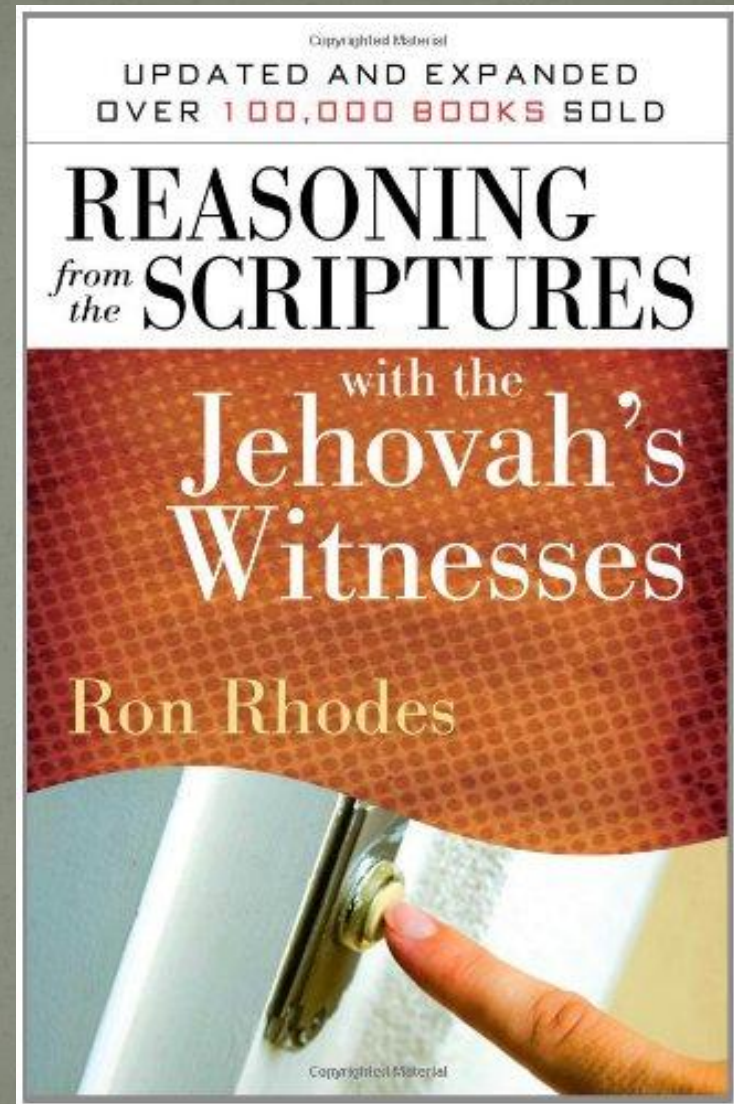
Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*,
rev. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany
House), 2003.



I. Introduction

- A. Goals
- B. General Tips
- C. Two Key Resources

Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House), 2009.



A Brief History of the Jehovah's Witnesses



II. A Brief History

A. Charles Taze Russell

- Born February 16, 1852 in Pennsylvania
- Quickly grew uncomfortable with many orthodox doctrines
 - He eventually would deny (1) the Trinity, (2) the deity of Christ, (3) the bodily resurrection and (4) bodily return of Christ, (5) eternal punishment, (6) the eternal existence of the soul, and (7) penal substitutionary atonement.
- In 1870 he began teaching a Bible class in Pittsburgh. Six years later, the group elected him to be their “pastor.”

II. A Brief History

A. Charles Taze Russell

- 1879 – Founded *The Herald of the Morning*, which developed into *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*.
- 1884 – Incorporated “Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society,” which published *The Millennial Dawn*, now called *Studies in the Scriptures*.
 - This was a series of seven books written by Russell outlining the beliefs and theology of his followers.
- 1897 – His wife of 18 years, Maria, left him, leaving him in sole financial control of the organization.

II. A Brief History

A. Charles Taze Russell

B. Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford

- A split within the organization occurred in 1917 over a disagreement with one of Russell's posthumous publications.
- A minority remained faithful to Russell's teachings, while the majority followed Rutherford. It was this group that later became known as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

II. A Brief History

A. Charles Taze Russell

B. Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford

- The group assumed the name, “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” in 1931, applying Isaiah 43:10 to themselves:
- NWT: “You are my witnesses,” declares Jehovah, “Yes, my servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and have faith in me And understand that I am the same One. Before me no God was formed, And after me there has been none.”

II. A Brief History

A. Charles Taze Russell

B. Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford

- Since Rutherford's death, there have been other presidents of the Society. However, all Society publications since Russell and Rutherford are issued anonymously.
- They say that this serves humility, but in actuality it makes it "impossible for anyone to evaluate the authors' qualifications, expertise, or authority in the areas in which they write" (Martin, 64).

II. A Brief History

A. Charles Taze Russell

B. Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford

C. A Denial of Russell?

- It is well-documented that Charles Taze Russell was not a man of integrity, and, as a result, some Witnesses have desired to distance themselves from him and his theology.
- But their theology is nearly identical, and the Watchtower periodicals continued to affirm Russell long after his death.

(For more, see Martin, 60-63; 78-81)

II. A Brief History

A. Charles Taze Russell

B. Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford

C. A Denial of Russell?

- After thorough documentation, Martin concludes: “Through a careful perusal of these facts, it is a simple matter to determine that Jehovah’s Witnesses have never stopped being ‘Russellites,’ no matter how loudly some have proclaimed the opposite. To those who are enmeshed in the Watchtower’s web, we can only say that you are not following a ‘new’ theocratic organization; you are following the old teachings of Charles Taze Russell, a bitter antagonist of historical Christianity, who has bequeathed to you a gospel of spiritual confusion” (62).

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

The Question of Authority

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

- “So Jehovah’s visible organization under Christ is a channel for bringing the divine interpretation of his word to his devoted people.”

– *The Watchtower*, June 1, 1938: 169

- “Is not the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society the one and only channel which the Lord has used in dispensing his truth continually since the beginning of the harvest period?”

– *The Watchtower*, Apr 1, 1919: 6414

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

- “They [i.e., Witnesses] must adhere absolutely to the decisions and scriptural understanding of the Society because God has given it this authority over his people.

– *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1972: 272

- “[God] does not impart his holy spirit and understanding and appreciation of his Word apart from his visible organization.”

– *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1965: 391

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

- “If we are to walk in the light of truth we must recognize not only Jehovah God as our father but his organization as our ‘mother.’”

– *The Watchtower*, May 1957: 274

Thus, the Watchtower functions in a similar way that the Magisterium does in Roman Catholicism. The Watchtower Society is “mother Church,” the sole arbiter of God's Word and God's will on earth.

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

- Thus, the Watchtower functions in a similar way that the Magisterium does in Roman Catholicism. The Watchtower Society is “mother Church,” the sole arbiter of God’s Word and God’s will on earth.
- But this also means that it is subject to the same challenges as the Magisterium. If we can demonstrate just *one* error or contradiction, the claim of infallible authority crumbles.

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

1. Independent thinking is discouraged

“Avoid independent thinking ... questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organization. ... Fight against independent thinking.”

– *The Watchtower*, Jan 15, 1983: 22, 27

“[The Watchtower Society is] an organization to direct the minds of God's people.”

– *The Watchtower*, Mar 1, 1983: 25

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

1. Independent thinking is discouraged

“For example, what will you do if you receive a letter or some literature, open it, and see right away that it is from an apostate? Will curiosity cause you to read it, just to see what he has to say? You may even reason, ‘It won’t affect me; I’m too strong in the truth. And besides, if we have the truth, we have nothing to fear. The truth will stand the test.’ In thinking this way, some have fed their minds upon apostate reasoning and have fallen prey to serious questioning and doubt.”

– *The Watchtower*, Mar 15, 1986: 12

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

1. Independent thinking is discouraged

2. Dealings with Apostates and Dissenters

“Witnesses are not only to isolate themselves from those who were once Witnesses and have been disfellowshipped or disassociated, but also from anyone who is not a Witness and who attempts to present a view contrary to the Watchtower. No Witness is allowed to read dissenting material, whether it is written by a disgruntled Jehovah's Witness, a disfellowshipped or disassociated Witness, or someone who has never been a Witness.”

– Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 68

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

1. Independent thinking is discouraged
2. Dealings with Apostates and Dissenters
3. The Threat of Disfellowship for Dissent

“A disfellowshipped person is cut off from the congregation, and the congregation has nothing to do with him. ... [The members of the congregation] will not converse with such a one or show him recognition in any way. If the disfellowshipped person attempts to talk to others in the congregation, they should walk away from him.”

– *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1963: 411–13

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

1. Independent thinking is discouraged

2. Dealings with Apostates and Dissenters

3. The Threat of Disfellowship for Dissent

- Recognize what you're up against in those evangelistic encounters. You're not merely asking them to adopt a new theology or come to a new church. You're asking them to abandon their entire lives, and to be entirely cut off by all of their friends and family. If you're vehemently opposing them, they may immediately write you off as a deluded tool of Satan.

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

1. Independent thinking is discouraged
2. Dealings with Apostates and Dissenters
3. The Threat of Disfellowship for Dissent
 - Paul's exhortation is relevant here:

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. – Colossians 4:5

III. The Watchtower

- A. Jehovah's Visible Organization
- B. Cultish Authoritarianism
- C. The Denial of *Sola Scriptura*

- “The Bible is an organizational book and belongs to the Christian congregation as a whole, not to individuals, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible. For this reason the Bible cannot be properly understood without Jehovah's visible organization in mind.”

– *The Watchtower*, Oct 1, 1967, 587

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

C. The Denial of *Sola Scriptura*

- “Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication [The Watchtower Society] that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do.”

– *The Watchtower*, Dec 1, 1981, 27

“God has not arranged for [His] Word to speak independently or shine forth life-giving truths by itself. It is through his organization God provides this light.”

– *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1957: 174

III. The Watchtower

- A. Jehovah's Visible Organization
- B. Cultish Authoritarianism
- C. The Denial of *Sola Scriptura*

- Note: the role of the illuminator of Scripture has been stolen from the Holy Spirit and transferred to the Watchtower Society.

Ask: "How did people understand the Bible for 18 centuries prior to the existence of the Watchtower Society? Did God not care to reveal Himself accurately to His people for 1800 years?"

III. The Watchtower

- A. Jehovah's Visible Organization
- B. Cultish Authoritarianism
- C. The Denial of *Sola Scriptura*

- “Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the *Scripture Studies* aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years—if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the *Scripture Studies* with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures.”

—*The Watchtower*, Sept 15, 1910: 298

III. The Watchtower

A. Jehovah's Visible Organization

B. Cultish Authoritarianism

C. The Denial of *Sola Scriptura*

- “They say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But, strangely, through such ‘Bible reading,’ they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom’s clergy were teaching 100 years ago.”

–*The Watchtower*, Aug 15, 1981: 29

Scripture is doing its work!

III. The Watchtower

D. Inaccuracies and Contradictions

Teaching	Statement	But!
Christ's "Invisible Presence" begins in 1874.	1928: "The time of the Lord's second presence dates from 1874" (<i>The Harp of God</i> , 236).	They needed another date.
The Battle of Armageddon ends in 1914.	"The 'battle of the great day of God Almighty' (Rev 16:14), which will end in AD 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's present rulership, is already commenced" (<i>The Time Is at Hand</i> , 101).	Nothing happened in 1914.
The Battle of Armageddon ends in 1918.	1917: "In the year 1918, when God destroys the churches wholesale and the church members by millions..." (<i>The Finished Mystery</i> , 485).	Nothing happened in 1918.
The Battle of Armageddon will come <i>around</i> 1925.	1924: "The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the Scriptures because it is fixed by the law God gave to Israel. ... Even before 1925 the great crisis will be reached and probably passed" (<i>The Watch Tower</i> , July 15, 1924: 211).	Nothing happened in 1925.

III. The Watchtower

D. Inaccuracies and Contradictions

Teaching	Statement	But!
1914 is the starting date for the last generation before the Battle of Armageddon	1950: "The thirty-six intervening years since 1914, instead of postponing Armageddon, have only made it nearer than most people think. Do not forget: 'This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled' (Matt 24:34)" (<i>The Watchtower</i> , November 1, 1950: 419).	Some people in the generation of 1914 died.
People who were present <i>and understood</i> the events of 1914 will live to see the Battle of Armageddon.	1978: "The 'generation' ... applies to Christ's followers and others who were able to observe that war and the other things that have occurred in fulfillment of Jesus' composite 'sign.' Some of such persons 'will by no means pass away until' all of what Christ prophesied occurs..." (<i>The Watchtower</i> , October 1, 1978: 31).	Some of the people who were present <i>and understood</i> the events died.
Anyone, not everyone, born by 1914 will live to see Armageddon.	1984: "...the babies of that generation are now seventy years old or older. And others alive in 1914 are in their 80s or 90s, a few even having reached 100. There are still many millions of that generation alive. Some of them 'will by no means pass away until all things occur' (Luke 21:32)"	That generation has almost entirely died out.

III. The Watchtower

D. Inaccuracies and Contradictions

Teaching	Statement	But!
We give up! Anyone who sees the events signaling the End, regardless of any relationship to 1914, will see the Battle of Armageddon.	1995: “Eager to see the end of this evil system, Jehovah’s People have at times speculated about the time when the ‘great tribulation’ would break out, even tying this to calculations of what is the lifetime of a generation since 1914. However we ‘bring a heart of wisdom in’ not by speculating about how many years or days make up generation. ... ‘This generation; apparently refers to the peoples of the earth who see the sign of Christ’s presence, but fail to mend their ways’” (<i>The Watchtower</i> , November 1, 1995: 17-20).	

III. The Watchtower

D. Inaccuracies and Contradictions

- “Of course, it is easy to say that this group acts as a ‘prophet’ of God. It is another thing to prove it. The only way that this can be done is to review the record. What does it show?”
– *The Watchtower*, Apr 1, 1972: 197
- “The best method of proof is to put a prophecy to the test of time and circumstances. The Bible invites such a test...the Bible...established the rules for testing a prophecy at Deuteronomy 18:20–22.”
– *The Watchtower*, Mar 1, 1972: 151

III. The Watchtower

D. Inaccuracies and Contradictions

- “The best method of proof is to put a prophecy to the test of time and circumstances. The Bible invites such a test...the Bible...established the rules for testing a prophecy at Deuteronomy 18:20–22.”

– *The Watchtower*, Mar 1, 1972: 151

“But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

III. The Watchtower

D. Inaccuracies and Contradictions

Numerous others

1. Second coming of Christ in 1874
2. Second coming of Christ 1914, later changed to a “spiritual” second coming
3. The resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in 1925
4. The end of the world in 1975

III. The Watchtower

D. Inaccuracies and Contradictions

- *The Watchtower* magazine says that when one discovers false prophets, “the people should no longer trust them as safe guides” (May 5, 1930: 154).
- Ask: Given all of these failed prophecies, can you still trust The Watchtower Society as a “safe guide” and a “true prophet of God”? How?

The New World Translation



IV. The New World Translation

- The Jehovah's Witnesses establish their aberrant theology with the aid of a specious translation of the Scriptures, the New World Translation.
- The NWT has been universally condemned by reputable New Testament scholars:
 - “radically biased” (Robert Countess)
 - “reprehensible” (Bruce Metzger)
 - “intellectually dishonest” (William Barclay)

(Rhodes, 96)

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

- “Let it be remembered that the New World Bible translation committee had no known translators with recognized degrees in Greek or Hebrew exegesis or translation.”

– Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults*, 93

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

- Frederick Franz, the VP of the Watchtower Society and later its president, was sent as a representative of the Society and the Translation Communications to a court proceeding.

Q: Have you also made yourself familiar with Hebrew?

A (Franz): Yes.

Q: So that you have a substantial linguistic apparatus at your command?

A: Yes, for use in my biblical work.

Q: I think you are able to read and follow the Bible in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and French?

A: Yes.

[...]

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

- Frederick Franz, the VP of the Watchtower Society and later its president, was sent as a representative of the Society and the Translation Communications to a court proceeding.

Q: Can you, yourself, translate that into Hebrew?

A: Which?

Q: That fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis.

A: You mean here?

Q: Yes.

A: No.

(Cited in Martin, 93-94)

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

B. Blatant Alterations: Colossians 1:16–17

- NASB: For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
- NWT: because by means of him all **other** things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All **other** things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all **other** things, and by means of him all **other** things were made to exist

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

B. Blatant Alterations: John 1:1

- NASB: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- NWT: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was **a** god.

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

B. Blatant Alterations: Philippians 1:23

- NASB: But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better
- NWT: I am torn between these two things, for I do desire **the releasing** and the being with Christ, which is, to be sure, far better.

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

B. Blatant Alterations: Philippians 1:23

They tamper with this verse in order to protect their doctrine of soul sleep.

- If Paul is saying that to depart from this life is to be with Christ, that means that the soul lives on after the body dies. They deny this.
- Therefore, they “translate” it as “the releasing” and say it refers not to *Paul’s* releasing, but to *Christ’s* releasing of Himself from His “heavenly restraints” and returning to earth in His second coming.

IV. The New World Translation

A. No Scholarly Repute

B. Blatant Alterations: Philippians 1:23

There is absolutely no grammatical warrant for this.

- “To depart” is *analousai*, an aorist infinitive active verb. But the appendix of the NWT claims that it is a verbal noun. But a “verbal noun” is the *definition* of a participle. Though he could have, Paul did not use a participle here.
- One scholar’s conclusion is apt: “Words fail when confronted with this classic example of unparalleled deceit, which finds no support in any Greek text or exegetical grammatical authority” (Martin, 98–99).

IV. The New World Translation

- A. No Scholarly Repute
- B. Blatant Alterations

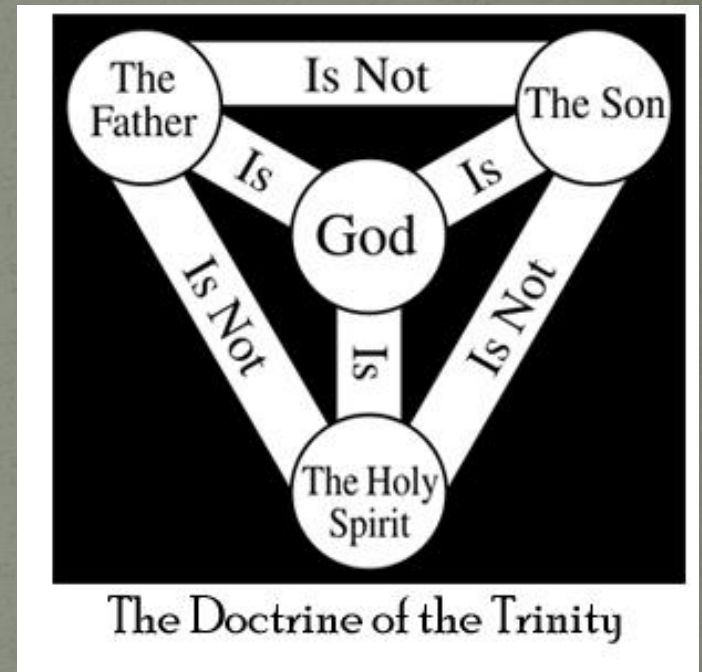
Because the Jehovah's Witnesses question the accuracy of modern Bible translations and distort the New Testament text by means of the NWT, to properly engage them we must be familiar with basic textual and translational issues in key passages of the New Testament.

Historical Matters in Brief

V. Historical Matters

When Jehovah's Witnesses, interact with Christians, they often insist that they are Christians, too.

However, their denial of the Trinity and the deity of Christ puts them squarely at odds with historic Christian orthodoxy.



V. Historical Matters

A. The Nicene Creed (325)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost. [...]

V. Historical Matters

A. The Nicene Creed (325)

But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable'—they are condemned by the holy catholic [i.e., universal] and apostolic Church.

V. Historical Matters

- A. The Nicene Creed (325)
- B. The Athanasian Creed

“And the catholic [universal] faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. ...”

V. Historical Matters

A. The Nicene Creed (325)

B. The Athanasian Creed

C. The Ante-Nicene Fathers

- Ignatius of Antioch (c. 50–117): For our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived by Mary according to God's plan, both from the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit.

(Letter to the Ephesians, 18.2. Holmes, AF, 197.)

- Polycarp of Smyrna (69–155): Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal high priest himself, the Son of God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth . . . , and to us with you, and to all those under heaven who will yet believe in our Lord and God Jesus Christ and in his Father who raised him from the dead.

(Philippians 12:2. Holmes, AF, 295.)

V. Historical Matters

A. The Nicene Creed (325)

B. The Athanasian Creed

C. The Ante-Nicene Fathers

- Justin Martyr (100–165): And that Christ being Lord, and God the Son of God... *(Dialogue with Trypho, 128. ANF, I:264.)*
- Justin Martyr (100–165): Therefore these words testify explicitly that He [Jesus] is witnessed to by Him [the Father] who established these things, as deserving to be worshipped, as God and as Christ. *(Dialogue with Trypho, 63. ANF, I:229.)*

V. Historical Matters

A. The Nicene Creed (325)

B. The Athanasian Creed

C. The Ante-Nicene Fathers

- Justin Martyr (100–165): For if you had understood what has been written by the prophets, you would not have denied that He was God, Son of the only, unbegotten, unutterable God. (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 126. ANF, I:263.)
- Tatian (110–172): We do not act as fools, O Greeks, nor utter idle tales when we announce that God was born in the form of man. (*Address to the Greeks*, 21. ANF, II:74.)

V. Historical Matters

A. The Nicene Creed (325)

B. The Athanasian Creed

C. The Ante-Nicene Fathers

- Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215): “This Word, then, the Christ, the cause of both our being at first (for He was in God) and of our well-being, this very Word has now appeared as man, He alone being both, both God and man—the Author of all blessings to us; by whom we, being taught to live well, are sent on our way to life eternal. . . . The Word, who in the beginning bestowed on us life as Creator when He formed us, taught us to live well when He appeared as our Teacher; that as God He might afterwards conduct us to the life which never ends.”
(*Exhortation to the Heathen*, 1. ANF, II:173)

V. Historical Matters

A. The Nicene Creed (325)

B. The Athanasian Creed

C. The Ante-Nicene Fathers

- Irenaeus of Lyons (120–202): “Christ Jesus [is] our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father.” (*Against Heresies*, 1.10.1. ANF, I:330)
- Hippolytus (170–235): “The Logos alone of this God is from God himself; wherefore also the Logos is God, being the substance of God.” (*Refutation of All Heresies*, 10.29. ANF, V:151.)

Various Heresies in Brief



VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

- “As for the ‘Holy Spirit,’ the so-called ‘third Person of the Trinity,’ we have already seen that it is not a person, but God’s active force.” – *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life*, 1968, 24
- “To a certain extent, it [i.e., the Holy Spirit] can be likened to electricity, a force that can be adapted to perform a great variety of operations.” – *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” – Acts 5:3-4

“Forces” can’t be lied to. Only *persons* can be lied to.

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

- But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to **the Holy Spirit** and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but **to God**.” – Acts 5:3-4

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit...

- Speaks (Acts 13:2)
- Sends missionaries (Acts 13:4)
- Prophesies (Acts 21:11)
- Knows the thoughts of God (1 Cor 2:11)
- Can be grieved (Eph 4:30)

An impersonal force can do none of these. These are all characteristics of personhood.

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a “He.”

- John 16:7 (NWT) – For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you; but if I do go, I will send him (αὐτὸν) to you.
- Even the New World Translation can't ignore the accusative singular *masculine* pronoun. The Holy Spirit is a *He* and not an *it*. And we don't call *forces*, “he” and “she.”

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

B. The Denial of Hell

- “Imperfect man does not torture even a mad dog, but kills it. And yet the clergymen attribute to God, who is love, the wicked crime of torturing human creatures merely because they had the misfortune to be born sinners.” – *Let God Be True*, 99
- “To torment a person *eternally* because he did wrong on earth *for a few years* is contrary to justice.”

– *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, 89

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

B. The Denial of Hell

Responding to the charge of injustice

- Punishment for sin is measured by the dignity of the one sinned against.
 - Smack your dog
 - Smack your spouse
 - Smack the President of the United States

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

B. The Denial of Hell

Responding to the charge of injustice

- Punishment for sin is measured by the dignity of the one sinned against.
- All sin is fundamentally a sin against God, and He is *infinitely* holy. Therefore, sin against an *infinitely* holy God demands an *infinite* punishment.

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

B. The Denial of Hell

Responding to the charge of injustice

- Punishment for sin is measured by the dignity of the one sinned against.
- All sin is fundamentally a sin against God, and He is *infinitely* holy. Therefore, sin against an *infinitely* holy God demands an *infinite* punishment.
- The severity of the punishment points to the holiness of God. He is so righteous that sin against Him requires eternal conscious torment.

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection

“Jehovah God raised him from the dead, not as a human Son, but as a mighty immortal spirit Son.”

– *Let God Be True*, 40

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection

Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

– John 2:19–21

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection

But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them.

– Luke 24:37-43

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection
 - Luke 24:37-43
 - Disembodied spirits don't have stomachs and digestive tracts. Spirits don't eat broiled fish. *Bodies* consume food. Jesus was raised from the dead in His body.

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

B. The Denial of Hell

C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection

- Luke 24:37-43
- But [Thomas] said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” ... Then [Jesus] said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

– John 20:25, 27

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection

Ask: “How can the Watchtower Society deny the bodily resurrection when Jesus promised to raise Himself *bodily* (John 2:21), and, after His resurrection, explicitly said that He was not a spirit (Luke 24:39)?

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection
- D. The Denial of the Visible, Bodily Return of Christ
 - “It is a settled scriptural truth, therefore, that human eyes will not see him at his second coming, neither will he come in a fleshly body.” – *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 295
 - “Christ Jesus came to the Kingdom in A.D. 1914, but unseen to men.” – *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 300

VI. Various Heresies

A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

B. The Denial of Hell

C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection

D. The Denial of the Visible, Bodily Return of Christ

- “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

– 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection
- D. The Denial of the Visible, Bodily Return of Christ

- “For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ... And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the ‘Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky’ with power and great glory.”

– Matthew 24:27, 30

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection
- D. The Denial of the Visible, Bodily Return of Christ

- Matthew 24:27, 30
- “Behold, He is coming with the clouds,’ and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.” – Revelation 1:7

VI. Various Heresies

- A. The Denial of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Denial of Hell
- C. The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection
- D. The Denial of the Visible, Bodily Return of Christ

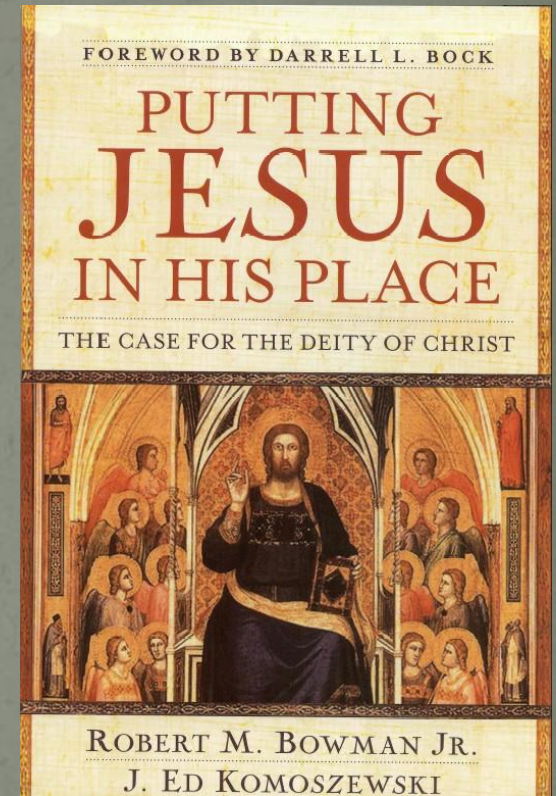
Ask: “How can the Watchtower Society maintain that Christ returned invisibly in 1914 if Matthew 24:27–30 and Revelation 1:7 say that *every eye* will see Him?

The Deity of Jesus Christ



VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- Robert Bowman and Ed Komoszewski provide a helpful mnemonic for assimilating the weight of Biblical evidence for Christ's deity. Jesus shares the HANDS of God: His honors, atttributes, names, deeds, and seat.



VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

The New Testament presents Jesus as the recipient of honors reserved exclusively for God (B&K, 270).

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

- Honors

- Lauded as the Creator and Sustainer of the world (Col 1:16–17)
- Honored in doxologies (2 Pet 3:18)
- The object of the saints' worship (Rev 5:9–10)
- To be honored just as one honors the Father (John 5:23)
- God Himself commands all angels to worship Him (Heb 1:6)
 - Such a command would be unseemly if Jesus were a mere angel. Indeed, the angels rightly refuse such worship (Rev 19:10; 22:8–9), but Jesus Himself accepts it without reproof (Matt 14:33; John 20:28).

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

Jesus also shares the attributes of God, for “in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9).

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

- **Attributes**

- “The radiance of [the Father’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature” (Heb 1:3)
- The Holy One of God (John 6:69)
- Called Faithful and True (Rev 19:10),
- Righteous in all He says and does (2 Tim 4:8),
- The embodiment of love (1 John 3:16).
- Eternal (John 1:1)
- Omnipresent (Matt 28:20)
- Omniscient (John 21:17)
- Immutable (Heb 13:8)
- Sovereign (Phil 3:20–21)

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

A study of the names applied to Jesus will also reveal His deity.

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

- Names

- God (John 1:1; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:8), even the *true* God (1 John 5:20)!
- The Holy One (Acts 3:14; 13:35).
- The Son of God (Matt 16:16), a title for which the Jews sought to stone Him for blasphemy (John 5:18; 10:33; 19:7)
- The “I AM” (John 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5); He thus equated Himself with the covenant God of Israel (Exod 3:14), which the Jews recognized as outrageous (John 8:59; 18:6).
- Lord (Luke 2:11; Acts 10:36; Phil 2:11); The Greek *kurios* is used 6,000+ times in the LXX to translate the divine name.

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

Jesus also shares the deeds of His Father.

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

- Deeds

- Created the world (John 1:1–3; Col 1:16)
- Sustains the world by the word of His power (Heb 1:3; Col 1:17)
- Forgives sins (Luke 5:20–21).
- Gives eternal life (John 10:28)
- Gives the Holy Spirit (John 20:22)
- Gives spiritual gifts to the Church (Eph 4:8–11)
- Controls the forces of nature (Matt 8:23–27)
- Raises the dead (John 11:25–26)
- Judges the world (Acts 10:42)

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

Finally, Jesus shares the seat of the Father, the very position and place of God Himself.

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

- Seat

- He has been seated “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named” (Eph 1:21; cf. Phil 2:9–11).
- The very throne of God is called “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev 22:1, 3).

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

- 1. The Son's humiliation

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”

– Matthew 24:36

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

Part of the Son's humiliation was to surrender the independent exercise of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8). Part of what it means for Him to be the God-*Man* is that He has both a fully divine nature and a fully human nature inhering in His one Person.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

“Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only.”

– Matthew 21:18–19a

- In His humanness, Jesus approached the fig tree to satisfy His hunger, not knowing that it had borne no fruit.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

“...and He said to it, ‘No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.’” – Matthew 21:19b

- And yet in His deity, He reveals His omnipotence in causing the tree to wither.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
 - 1. The Son's humiliation
 - 2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” – Colossians 1:15

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)

- Greek πρωτότοκος does not mean “first created.” That would be the word πρωτόκτισις.
- πρωτότοκος means “first in rank, preeminent one, heir.”

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)

- πρωτότοκος means “first in rank, preeminent one, heir.”
 - “Among the ancient Hebrews, the word ‘firstborn’ referred to the son in the family who was in the *preeminent position*, regardless of whether or not he was literally the first son born to the parents. This firstborn son would not only be the preeminent one, he would also be the heir to a double portion of the family inheritance” (Rhodes, 131).

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)

- Greek πρωτότοκος does not mean “first created.” That would be the word πρωτόκτισις.
- πρωτότοκος means “first in rank, preeminent one, heir.”
 - David, the last-born son of Jesse, would be exalted to be the firstborn (Psalm 89:27)

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)

- πρωτότοκος means “first in rank, preeminent one, heir.”

“Christ is the firstborn in the sense that He is positionally preeminent over creation and supreme over all things. He is also the heir of all creation in the sense that all that belongs to the Father is also the Son's” (Rhodes, 130).

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
 - 1. The Son's humiliation
 - 2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)
 - 3. Only Begotten (*monogenēs*)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” – John 3:16

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation
2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)
3. Only Begotten (*monogenēs*)

- The term μονογενής derives from *monos* (only) and *genos* (kind). It is best translated, “unique,” or “one and only.”

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation
2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)
3. Only Begotten (*monogenēs*)
 - The term μονογενής derives from *monos* (only) and *genos* (kind). It is best translated, “unique,” or “one and only.”
 - “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.” – Hebrews 11:17

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation

2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)

3. Only Begotten (*monogenēs*)

- But of course, Isaac was not Abraham's only begotten. Abraham had also begotten Ishmael. The point was that Isaac was Abraham's *unique* son—the one and only son of the promise.
- “The adjective ‘only begotten’ conveys the idea, not of derivation and subordination, but of uniqueness and consubstantiality. Jesus is all that God is, and He alone is this.” – B. B. Warfield

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
 1. The Son's humiliation
 2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)
 3. Only Begotten (*monogenēs*)

So in reality, the writers of Scripture and the Church Fathers speak of Christ as being “only begotten” precisely because the Son shares the very nature of His Father. All that God the Father is in His essence, so is God the Son.

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation
2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)
3. Only Begotten (*monogenēs*)
4. Functional Subordination

“The Father is greater than I.” – John 14:28

“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.” – 1 Corinthians 11:3

VII. The Deity of Christ

A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God

B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

1. The Son's humiliation
2. The firstborn of all creation (*prōtótokos*)
3. Only Begotten (*monogenēs*)
4. Functional Subordination

- Ask: “Do you also believe that women are essentially inferior to men?”
- Man and woman are equal in essence and nature, even if they are not equal in function.
- In the same way, the Father and the Son are equal in essence (both are God), even though the Son occupies a functionally subordinate role.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1

NASB: “...and the Word was God.”

NWT: “...and the Word was **a** god.”

Greek: “...καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.”

and God was the Word

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1
 - 1. Polytheism

If the Word was *a* god, then polytheism becomes unavoidable.

Isaiah 45:21 (NWT) – There is no other God but me;
A righteous God and a Savior, there is none besides me.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1

- 1. Polytheism
- 2. **Inconsistent translation**

The Jehovah's Witness' argument is that since there is no article in the Greek, "God" should be translated as an indefinite noun: "a god."

But there are dozens of other instances in the NT where the NWT does not translate the anarthrous θεὸς as "a god."

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1
 - 1. Polytheism
 - 2. Inconsistent translation

Of the 282 occurrences of *theos* without the article in the NT, the NWT translates it “a god,” “god(s),” or “godly” **only 16 times**.

That means that the NWT held to the same standard that they demand in John 1:1 **only six percent** of the time.

R. H. Countess, *The Jehovah's Witnesses' New Testament: A Critical Analysis of the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1982), 54-55.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1

- 1. Polytheism

- 2. **Inconsistent translation**

In fact, the anarthrous *theos* occurs five other times in this very paragraph, but is never again translated “a god” by the NWT!

- John 1:6 – There came a man who was sent as a representative of God
- John 1:12 – ...he gave authority to become God's children...
- John 1:13 – And they were born, ... from God
- John 1:18 – No man has seen God at any time;
- John 1:18 – The only-begotten god who is at the Father's side...

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1
 - 1. Polytheism
 - 2. Inconsistent translation

The reality is: “and the Word was *God*” is the proper translation of John 1:1. It is normal for the Greek language to behave this way, and the grammar is actually very precise.

Further, it would be impossible to make sense of dozens of passages of Scripture if the JW translation practice in John 1:1 were to be followed throughout the NT. And that is precisely why they have chosen not to follow it!

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1
 - 1. Polytheism
 - 2. Inconsistent translation

New Testament scholar Dan Wallace writes of John 1:1:

“[This] was the most concise way [John] could have stated that the Word was God and yet was distinct from the Father.”

– Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, 269

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1

1. Polytheism
2. Inconsistent translation
3. Contextual impossibility

“All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” – John 1:3, ESV.

Jesus does not belong to the category of created things, for nothing *that has been made* was made without Him. Jesus made everything in the category of “made.” And because it is absurd to assert that one could take part in creating himself, Christ was not created. He is the eternal God.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1
- D. Jesus is Jehovah

“If Jesus of the ‘New Testament’ is Jehovah of the ‘Old Testament,’ as many claim, should there not be at least one reference saying that Jesus is Jehovah? Yet there is not one.”

– *The Watchtower*, Mar 15 1975: 174

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1
- D. Jesus is Jehovah

Ask the Witness to read these passages of Scripture from his/her own Bible, in this order.

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
- B. JW Objections to the Deity of Christ
- C. John 1:1
- D. Jesus is Jehovah

Savior

- Titus 2:13 (NWT) – ...while we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God and of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Isaiah 43:11 (NWT) – I—I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior.

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Savior

- Titus 2:13 cp. Isaiah 43:11

Ask: If Isaiah 43:11 says there is no savior beside Jehovah, and Titus 2:13 calls Jesus “our Savior,” isn’t it plain that Jesus is Jehovah?

VII. The Deity of Christ

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- C. John 1:1
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Creator

- Colossians 1:16 (NWT) – Because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All other things have been created through him and for him.
- John 1:3 (NWT) – All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence.

VII. The Deity of Christ

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Creator

- Isaiah 44:24 (NWT) – “I am Jehovah, who made everything. I stretched out the heavens by myself, And I spread out the earth. Who was with me?”

VII. The Deity of Christ

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- C. John 1:1
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Creator

- John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; cp. Isaiah 44:24

Ask: If Isaiah 44:24 says that (a) Jehovah is the only One who participated in creation; and (b) Colossians 1:16 and John 1:3 say that Jesus participated in creation, then (c) Jesus is Jehovah, isn't He?

VII. The Deity of Christ

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The whole earth is full of His glory

- Isaiah 6:1–3 (NWT) – In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw Jehovah sitting on a lofty and elevated throne, and the skirts of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were standing above him; each had six wings. Each covered his face with two and covered his feet with two, and each of them would fly about with two. And one called to the other: “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of armies. The whole earth is filled with his glory.”

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The whole earth is full of His glory

- Isaiah 6:3 (NWT) – And one called to the other: “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of armies. The whole earth is filled with his glory.”
- John 12:41 – Isaiah said these things because he saw his [Jesus'] glory, and he spoke about him.

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- C. John 1:1
- D. Jesus is Jehovah

The whole earth is full of His glory

- Isaiah 6:1–3; cp. John 12:41

Ask: If Isaiah says that he saw the glory of Jehovah, and the Apostle John says that Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus and spoke of Him, isn't Jesus Jehovah?

VII. The Deity of Christ

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- D. Jesus is Jehovah

Prepare the way of Jehovah

- Isaiah 40:3 (NWT) – A voice of one calling out in the wilderness: “Clear up the way of Jehovah! Make a straight highway through the desert for our God.”
- Mark 1:1–3 – The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God: Just as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “(Look! I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.) A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of Jehovah! Make his roads straight.’”

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Prepare the way of Jehovah

- Isaiah 40:3; cp. Mark 1:1–3

Ask: If Isaiah's call to "prepare the way of Jehovah" is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, as Mark says, isn't Jesus Jehovah?

VII. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus shares the HANDS of God
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Every knee will bow and tongue confess

- Isaiah 45:23 (NWT) – By myself I have sworn; The word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, And it will not return: To me every knee will bend, Every tongue will swear loyalty.

VII. The Deity of Christ

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Every knee will bow and tongue confess

- Isaiah 45:23 (NWT) – To me every knee will bend, Every tongue will swear loyalty.
- Philippians 2:10–11 (NWT) – so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend—of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground—and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

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- C. John 1:1
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Every knee will bow and tongue confess

- Isaiah 45:23; cp. Philippians 2:10–11

Ask: If Isaiah 45:23 teaches that every knee will bow and tongue swear loyalty to *Jehovah*, and if Philippians 2:10–11 teaches that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that *Jesus* is Lord [note: Lord = Jehovah], then Jesus must be Jehovah, mustn't He?

VII. The Deity of Christ

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- D. Jesus is Jehovah

Alpha & Omega, First & Last

- Isaiah 44:6 (NWT) – This is what Jehovah says, The King of Israel and his Repurchaser, Jehovah of armies: ‘I am the first and I am the last; There is no God but me.
- Isaiah 48:12 (NWT) – Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I have called. I am the same One. I am the first; I am also the last.

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Alpha & Omega, First & Last

- Revelation 1:8 (NWT) – I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says Jehovah God, “the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty.”
- Revelation 21:6 (NWT) – And he said to me: “They have come to pass! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

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- C. John 1:1
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Alpha & Omega, First & Last

- Revelation 1:17–18 (NWT) – “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last, and the living one, and I became dead, but look! I am living forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of the Grave.”
- Revelation 2:8 (NWT) – “And to the angel of the congregation in Smyrna write: These are the things that he says, ‘the First and the Last,’ who became dead and came to life again.”

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Alpha & Omega, First & Last

- Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; Rev 1:7; 21:6; cp. Revelation 1:17–18; 2:8

Ask: If the Scriptures repeatedly say that Jehovah is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, and then in Revelation those titles are applied to *Jesus*, who died and rose again, Jesus *has* to be Jehovah, right? There cannot be *two* “firsts and lasts,” can there?

The “gospel” according to the Jehovah’s Witnesses

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

- “Jesus, no more and no less than a perfect human, became a ransom that compensated exactly for what Adam lost—the right to perfect human life on earth” (*Should You Believe in the Trinity?*).
- “The human life that Jesus Christ laid down in sacrifice must be exactly equal to that life which Adam forfeited for all his offspring: it must be a perfect human life, no more, no less” (*You May Survive Armageddon Into God’s New World*, 39).
- “Jesus’ birth on earth was not an incarnation. ... He was not a spirit-human hybrid, a man and at the same time a spirit person. ... He was flesh” (*What Has Religion Done for Mankind*, 231).

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

- A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)
 - Watchtower: Jesus was nothing more than a perfect human being.
 - Two Soteriological Problems

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

- Two Soteriological Problems

- 1. Original Sin

- “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...”
– Romans 5:12
 - If He was “no more, no less” than a human, He was born with a sinful nature. And a sinful nature always carries out works of sin.
 - A merely-human Jesus undermines His sinlessness, and thus disqualifies Him from being a blemishless atoning sacrifice.

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

- Two Soteriological Problems

1. Original Sin

2. Imputation of Righteousness

- “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:20
- “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” - Matthew 5:48

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

- Two Soteriological Problems

1. Original Sin

2. Imputation of Righteousness

- “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” - Matthew 5:48
- The standard of righteousness that is required for restored fellowship with God is *God’s* own righteousness. A “perfect” human could never achieve the kind of righteousness that is attributed to the Father alone.

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

- Two Soteriological Problems

1. Original Sin

2. Imputation of Righteousness

- Even if a merely-human Jesus’ righteousness was “God-level” (which it could never be), it could only be justly imputed to one other human life.
- But because the righteousness that Christ achieved is the righteousness of *God*, it is **infinite**, and so can be justly credited to the innumerable souls who trust Christ for righteousness.

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

B. The Rejection of *Solus Christus*

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A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

B. The Rejection of *Solus Christus*

Christ's work does not actually save

- “The ‘ransom for all’ given by ‘the man Christ Jesus’ does not give or guarantee everlasting life or blessing to any man; but it does guarantee to every man *another opportunity or trial for life everlasting*. “But the fact that men are ransomed from the first penalty [i.e., Adam’s original sin] does not guarantee that they may not, when individually tried for everlasting life, fail to render the obedience without which none will be permitted to live everlastingly.”

- *Studies in the Scriptures*, 150

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

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Christ's work does not actually save

- “The ransom given does not excuse sin in any; it does not propose to *count* sinners as saints, and usher them thus into everlasting bliss. “It merely releases the accepting sinner from the first condemnation and its results, both direct and indirect, and places him again on trial for life, in which trial his own willful obedience or willful disobedience will decide whether he may or may not have life everlasting.”

- *Studies in the Scriptures*, 152

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

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Christ’s work does not actually save

Translation:

- Christ’s work pays for original sin, wiping the slate clean for all who believe.
- But then it’s up to *us* to make a good run of our new trial of obedience.
- This is *not* the Gospel. It is the vilest form of heretical semi-Pelagianism.

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

- A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)
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- C. The Rejection of *Sola Gratia* & *Sola Fide*

How *do* we pass our trial obediently?

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

- A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)
- B. The Rejection of *Solus Christus*
- C. The Rejection of *Sola Gratia* & *Sola Fide*
 - 1. Identify the Watchtower as God’s authoritative organization on earth.

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

B. The Rejection of *Solus Christus*

C. The Rejection of *Sola Gratia* & *Sola Fide*

1. Identify the Watchtower as God’s authoritative organization on earth.

- “To receive everlasting life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization and serve God as a part of it.”

– *The Watchtower*, Feb 15, 1983: 12

- “Make haste to identify the visible theocratic organization of God that represents the king, Jesus Christ. It is essential for life. Doing so, be complete in accepting its every aspect.”

– *The Watchtower*, Oct 1, 1967: 591

- “Come to Jehovah’s organization for salvation.”

– *The Watchtower*, Nov 15, 1981: 27

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- A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)
- B. The Rejection of *Solus Christus*
- C. The Rejection of *Sola Gratia* & *Sola Fide*
 - 2. Five meetings per week
 - Public Talk – Sunday (normal service)
 - Watchtower Study – Just after the service
 - Theocratic Ministry School – Weekday evening
 - Service Meeting – Weekday evening (after previous)
 - Book study – Weekly

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

A. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21)

B. The Rejection of *Solus Christus*

C. The Rejection of *Sola Gratia* & *Sola Fide*

1. Identify the Watchtower as God’s authoritative organization on earth.
2. Five meetings per week
3. Fieldwork: “Publishing the ‘good news’ of God’s kingdom”

- “Immortality is a reward for faithfulness.” – *Let God Be True*, 74.
- “...to get one’s name written in that Book of Life will depend upon one’s works.”

– *The Watchtower*, Apr 1, 1947: 204.

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Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

– Galatians 5:1–4

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Paul says, if they receive circumcision—which is to say: if they allow even the smallest of religious rituals to become part of the ground of their confidence for salvation—“Christ will be of no benefit to you” (Gal 5:2).

Not: “He will be of some benefit to you, just not as much as otherwise.” No. Everyone who receives circumcision as a ground of righteousness is obligated to keep the whole law to earn that righteousness (Gal 5:3).

In other words, if you want your righteousness to be based even partly on works, you're under obligation to earn the whole thing by works. And then, seeking to be justified by the law, you are severed from Christ (Gal 5:4).

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Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

- Romans 10:1-3

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For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

– Romans 10:4

Praise God! Righteousness has been accomplished *outside* of us, and it can justly be credited to us through faith alone!

VIII. The Doctrine of Salvation

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Preach the Gospel!

- Ask: If you found me on the street and I was dying from a gunshot wound, and if I had only three minutes to live, what would you say to me so that I could receive salvation?
- Let them know that their answer is not the Gospel of the New Testament, and ask to share how you would respond.

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We need a perfect righteousness to stand before God. Your good works and the Jesus of the Watchtower Society cannot provide that for you.

But God promises that if you repent of your self-righteousness, trust alone in Christ’s perfect life, death, and resurrection for righteousness, and worship Him as your God, God will count Christ’s perfect righteousness to be yours through faith alone.

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We need a perfect righteousness to stand before God. Your good works and the Jesus of the Watchtower Society cannot provide that for you. But God promises that if you repent of your self-righteousness, trust alone in Christ’s perfect life, death, and resurrection for righteousness, and worship Him as your God, God will count Christ’s perfect righteousness to be yours through faith alone.

Lay down the burden of having to achieve your own righteousness, and receive salvation as a free gift through faith in Christ alone.

Conclusion:
“Who do you say that I am?”



Conclusion

“What think ye of Christ” is the test
To try both your state and your scheme.
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him.

- John Newton

Conclusion

“Today as of old, a proper response to the primary question, “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” (Matt. 22:42), constitutes a veritable touchstone of historic Christianity.

“Certain other aberrations in Biblical understanding may doubtless be tolerated if one is, so to speak, turned in the right direction with regard to Christology.

“But if a sect’s basic orientation toward Jesus Christ be erroneous, it must be seriously doubted whether the name ‘Christian’ can rightly be applied to such a system.”

- Bruce Metzger

“The Jehovah’s Witnesses and Jesus Christ”

Conclusion

“It is as damning to believe in the wrong Jesus as to believe in no Jesus. To believe in the wrong Jesus is as damning as to believe you’re saved by a rock—some animistic religion.

“You can’t be saved by believing the wrong thing about Christ. You must believe in His deity and humanity.”

- John MacArthur

Conclusion

Some take Him a creature to be,
A man, or an angel at most.
But these have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost.

So guilty, so helpless, am I
That I dare not confide in His blood,
Nor on His protection rely,
Unless I am sure He is God.

- John Newton

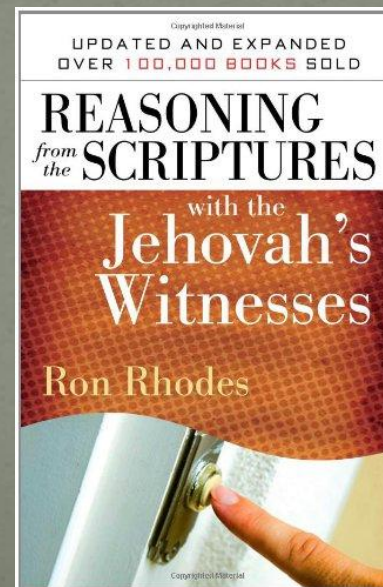
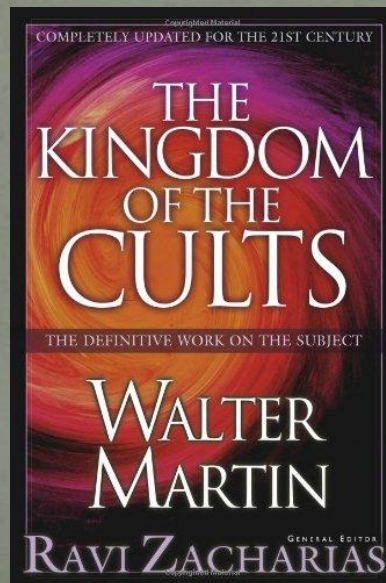
Key Resources

- On Jehovah's Witnesses

The Kingdom of the Cults, by Martin

Reasoning from the Scriptures

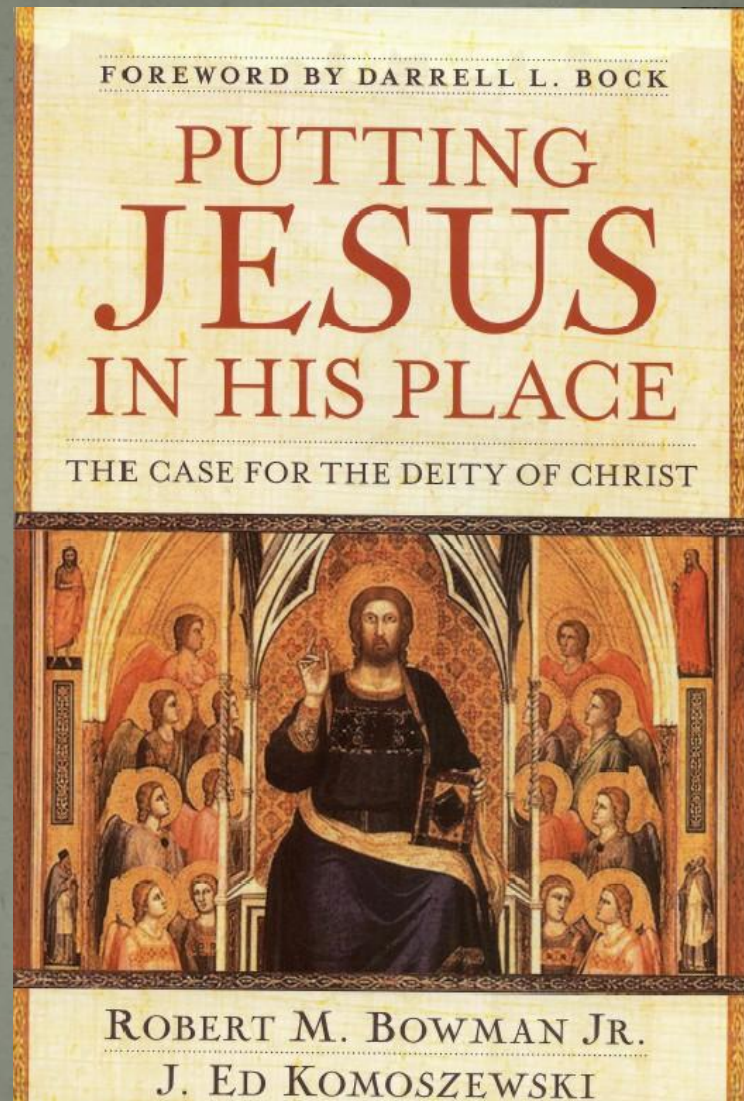
with the Jehovah's Witnesses, by Rhodes



Key Resources

- On the Deity of Christ

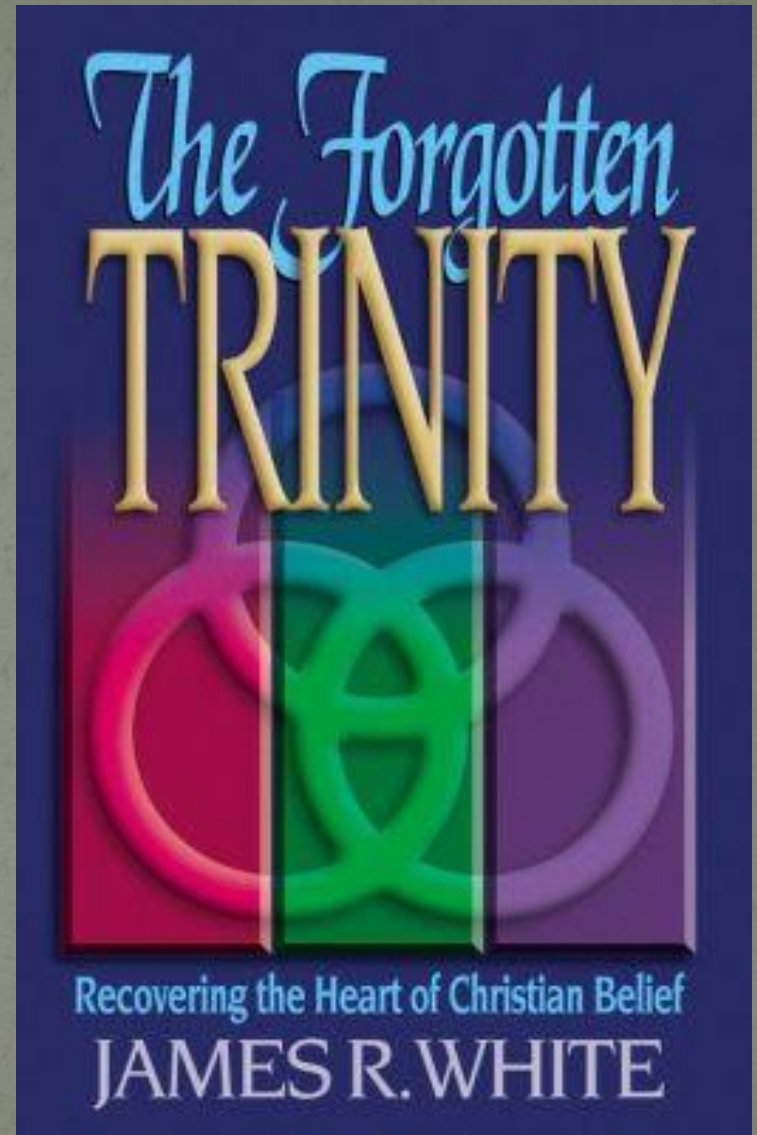
*Putting Jesus in His Place:
The Case for the Deity of
Christ*, by Robert Bowman
& Ed Komoszewski



Key Resources

- On the Trinity

*The Forgotten Trinity:
Recovering the Heart of
Christian Belief*, by James R.
White



Key Resources

- On the Arian Controversy

“A Survey of Heresies:
The Arians, Parts 1 & 2,” by
Phil Johnson

www.thegracelifepulpit.com

